

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Steve Daines  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus S. King  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Daines and Ranking Member King,

We write today to respectfully request your committee's prompt consideration of the *Weir Farm National Historical Park Redesignation Act*. If enacted, this legislation would change Weir Farm's designation from a National Historic Site to a National Historic Park. Identical companion legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Jim Himes.

The Weir Farm National Historic Site was established as a National Park Site in 1990 to preserve and interpret the historically significant properties and landscapes associated with the life and work of Alden Weir. In addition to preserving the art studio and home of painter Alden Weir, the sixty-acre site also includes a farm, gardens, and Weir Pond, which are still used by landscape artists today. In 2005, Weir Farm began a comprehensive rehabilitation and restoration of over eighty percent of its historic resources and landscapes, leading to the reopening in 2014.

Weir Farm National Historic Site is the only National Park Service site dedicated to American painting. Weir's work was instrumental in defining American Impressionism and the site is integral to his artistic vision and to the growth of a national style of painting. The documentation of over 250 painting sites in the Weir Preserve and the Weir Farm National Historic Site has led to better natural resource management of the park and proved it be a model for other parks to manage landscape and scenery as indicated in paintings.

Weir Farm should be redesignated as a National Historic Park to properly reflect its acreage, number of historic themes and artists, natural and cultural resources, and the national impact of the Weir Farm site. Weir Farm National Historic Site has grown to approximately 75 acres since the original designation in 1990, covering many related stories over a period of 135 years of artistic relevance, and extensive natural resources that had not been inventoried or known at the time of the designation. This redesignation will also reflect the increased visitation, collaboration with partners, and public programming since the park was restored and reopened in 2014.

We are hopeful that the committee can schedule consideration of this important legislation to help improve recognition of the site, preserve its cultural landscape, and increase its

ability to support the park's operations. We appreciate your attention to this matter, and look forward to working closely with you.

Sincerely,

---

CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
U.S. Senator